

# O'ER THE ATLANTIC.

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## LETTER I.

### AMERICA.

NEW YORK, *June 8th*, 1867.—The weather during the last few days has been sultry and hot, so much so that it has been quite oppressive. The steamship *Hibernia*, of the *Anchor Line*, Capt. Munro, plying between New York and Glasgow, left Pier 20, North River, about noon, on her voyage across the Atlantic, with a full list of cabin passengers, and a great many in the second cabin, intermediate and steerage, principally comprised of persons going to visit relatives and friends in various parts of Europe. Such being my own case. My wife and her brother accompanying me with a view of seeing scenes and life in the "Old World."

### AT SEA.

Scarcely had we got off Sandy Hook, (where the pilot left us) before our fellow passengers began



to feel the influence of a strong N. E. wind, which, being ahead, made the gallant ship as polite as a French dancing master, and ere the supper bell had rang, all, with but a few exceptions, were paying sickly tributes to Neptune. Thanks to my former experience of a seafaring life, I felt like partaking with a relish of the good things so nicely laid out for the evening repast, so sat down at the Captain's table with the *airs* of an old salt. At 8 p. m., wind increasing, bringing on sea-sickness among the passengers in its most terrible form. The cries and moans of the poor victims are pitiful to hear, some wishing they had never left *terra firma*, and others almost preferring death to the endurance of the malady, my wife and her brother not the least among the number, but they are fortunate in having me to devote that attention to them, which they could not otherwise get, for the stewards and stewardess have too much to do among so many passengers.

Midnight.—It now blows a gale of wind and the ship is under double reefed fore-and-aft sails, and laboring heavy, the more so, in consequence of being loaded by the head with seventy-five tons of coal, temporarily stowed in the waist\* before leaving New York, large quantities of which is washed away as she dives under a head sea, which put me in mind of an old sea phrase: "He that goes to sea for pleasure may go to h—l

\* Forward Gangway.



for pastime." But such is life, for how often do we pay for that we do not really enjoy.

9th.—This is the Sabbath. Wind as yesterday, but accompanied with a cold, drizzling rain. All the passengers, with the exception of two gentlemen and myself, still very much under the dire influence of sea-sickness, a profitable time to the owners so far as *dieting* is concerned. Noon—Passed a barque bound to the eastward, but *laying too*\* under close reefed main topsail, and laboring very heavy, very much more so than ourselves—during the last thirty-six hours we have made but little headway.

10th.—Fine and clear day with a strong breeze from the old quarter (N. E.) Passengers still in the arms of Neptune, especially the ladies. Afternoon—less wind, set more sail, i. e. by shaking out the reefs of the fore and aft sails. Some gentlemen passengers have made their appearance on deck, cutting but a sorry figure, having anything but "sea legs" under them. To-day made the acquaintance of Capt. Munro and the doctor (Flemington) of the ship, two unsophisticated sociable men. Evening—more moderate, made the acquaintance of Mr. Reed, the chief officer, with whom I had a long talk while walking the deck *a la sailor*, a gentleman I am much pleased with. All the officers seem to be very gentlemanly and sociable men, just the

\* Hove too. Keeping head to wind and sea as near as possible, so as to weather the gale the easier.



kind of men who should officer a passenger vessel.

11th.—A beautiful morning with pleasant breeze, but still ahead. A great many of the passengers feel better and are able to sit at the breakfast table, a mixed company, comprised of *Scotch, Irish, English, Welsh and American*; of Welsh there are only two, myself and a gentleman named Thomas, from Utica, N. Y., with whom I was acquainted eleven years ago, since which time I had not seen him until we met on board, after being two days out of New York, when, after some little conversation *pro* and *con*, we recollected each other—glad were we to meet under such peculiar circumstances and renew old acquaintance. Mr. Thomas is bound to the same part of Wales as myself—his parents reside about twenty miles from my native place. We now begin to be better acquainted with the officers of the ship. Captain Munro is the idol of his subordinates, whom they familiarly term the old man, not because he is any older than either of them, but because it is a sort of endearment. Mr. Reed, the chief officer, is a plain, matter-of-fact man, every inch a sailor. Not one of those kid glove kind, but a whole-soul, straight-up-and-down tar of the old school! he passed the principal part of his life in the East India trade, some portion as master, and it is presumed that so soon as a vacancy occurs in this line he will be



promoted to captain. Mr. Johnson, the second officer, is quite a young man, and one that will no doubt make his mark in the profession. Mr. Henderson, the third officer, is an elderly man, and I understand is to succeed Mr. Johnson as second on the ship next voyage, for Mr. Johnson is to remain on shore to undergo the usual examination for promotion before the Government Board of Examiners, which is very strict in the British Merchant Marine service, for no man is allowed to act as an officer on board of ship unless duly qualified to do so, a system we would do well to adopt in the United States Merchant Marine. Dr. Flemington and the purser Mr. Brown, two very polite gentlemen, make themselves very agreeable, and escort the ladies up and down the deck with that gallantry so generally unusual among sea-faring men, in short, they flirt with the ladies, play with the children, and do all in their power to make all comfortable and happy. Mr. MacTammany, the chief engineer, is also a very pleasant person. To-day Capt. Munro introduced a game to be played on the quarter deck, called *shuffle*, which is simply a number of squares formed of chalk lines on the deck and numbered so as to count fifteen each way, then the player stands twenty feet off with a long stick in his hand, resembling a billiard cue rest, and pushes with it a round block of wood with a flat surface towards the squares, when he that counts the most, which



depends upon which square his block rests, wins the game. This is an amusing and interesting game, and not without its excitement, a game that will serve much to do away with the monotony of a sea voyage.

12th.—During the night we had light airs, and in the early morning a calm. At noon, a light wind from the *old corner*. All the passengers on deck forgetful of the past, some playing shuffle, now becoming quite popular, others throwing rope quoits over a wooden peg and into a bucket, others reading, and away aft are some Democrats and Republicans discussing American politics, which, I am afraid, will not make any of them the wiser, for stubbornness will predominate on both sides. This evening a Rev. Mr. Kennedy, assisted by the Rev. Mr. Sprowl, from Pittsburgh, held divine service in the cabin, and later, a *Scotch piper* marched up and down the whole length of the ship, as stately as if a *Laird of the Isles*, playing upon his baggs the most popular airs of Scotland, much to the delight and amusement of the passengers, after which, the passengers retired to the cabin to enjoy a game of chess, checkers, whist, euchre, &c., the Captain, Doctor and Purser joining in with them.

13th.—A fair wind and warmer weather, all sail set, and a full head of steam on, expect to be on the banks of Newfoundland this afternoon. 2;30 P. M. signalled the American ship *West-*



*moreland* bound West. Evening—Wind increasing and shifting to the N. W. Shortened sail. Night—Wind more northerly accompanied with cold rain.

14<sup>th</sup>.—This morning light airs, yet we are making good headway under steam. We are now crossing the banks, in a fog, with the fog-whistle going every few minutes, to warn ships that possibly may be in our track, of our presence. Noon—drizzling cold rain. Evening—passed a French barque at anchor, with her boats out catching codfish.—Codfishing on the banks of Newfoundland is quite an extensive and lucrative business; during the season hundreds of vessels of various tonnage, from 100 to 500 tons, are engaged in catching and salting the fish, after which, they leave for various places to unload and dry the fish for market; many of those vessels, while on the banks, get run down by steamers and other vessels crossing to the eastward and westward during the thick fogs which generally prevail in these latitudes, and which often result in the partial or total destruction of one or the other of the ships colliding. It is therefore highly necessary to keep a good lookout. Steamers, in addition to their fog-whistles, carry lights of various colors, one at the foremast head and one on each side, starboard and larboard of the bridge. Sailing vessels blow a fog-horn and keep their bells ringing, which resembles a funeral knell, hence every precaution is, or if not,



should be exercised to prevent, which too often occurs, ships getting into collision.—I recollect, when in the Quebec trade many years ago, on the passage home, crossing the banks during a heavy gale of wind from the N. W., it was at night, the ship running before the wind under double reefed topsails, suddenly and within half a cable's length of us a small schooner was seen on our starboard quarter, hove too, with the helm lashed down\* and the crew all below. A minute or so earlier she must have crossed our bows, a narrow escape for her, for had the ship struck her we would have run clean over her, and sent her and the crew without a second's warning into the land of fishes. This was in my boyhood days, but it seems as though it was but yesterday.

\* To dispense with the services of a man at the helm.



## LETTER II.

## AT SEA, CONTINUED.

*June 15th.*—Strong cold northerly wind, and long-swelled sea, which causes the ship to roll very much, creating among some of the passengers a second attack of sea sickness. Noon—we are now seven days from New York, and over the banks of Newfoundland, going ten knots\* per hour, distance run, only 1200 miles, yet, if we have luck, may possibly complete the passage by this day week (Saturday). Evening—more moderate but still quite cold, causing me to miss very much the good services of my overcoat, which I negligently left behind in the railway car at Scranton, Pa. Night—beautifully clear moonlight, two hours difference in time between us and New York.

*16th.*—Early morning a dead calm, or what is generally termed by sailors, “Paddy’s hurricane up and down the masts and all over the decks,” and heavy swelled sea, the ship rolls very much.

\* A sea mile.

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Six A. M.—a pleasant breeze from the west, which continued until the afternoon, when it veered around to the S. W., which enables us to set our fore and aft sails as well as our square sails. Ship going eleven knots. We are now in what is termed the “Rolling Forties” ( $40^{\circ}$  north lat.), where the sea is generally in a very turbulent and excited state, skipping and jumping like boiling water. Evening—a drizzling rain with the wind from the same quarter but freshening. Ship doing well. Divine service was held in the cabin this morning and evening, Rev. Mr. Kennedy officiating.

17<sup>th</sup>.—This morning it blows a strong gale from the S. W., with a very high sea. Ship going thirteen knots under all the canvas and steam she can carry—such weather as we are having is quite unusual for *June*; none of us anticipated such rough cold weather this season of the year. Afternoon—wind shifted more to the westward, and the ship is running right before it, with the sea very high, causing her to roll and pitch heavily—notwithstanding, she proves herself to be an excellent sea boat. Most of the passengers are now confined to their rooms, some sea sick, and others for the want of “sea legs” to enable them to move about. Evening—passed a ship on larboard tack\* under close reefed main-top sail and mizzen stay sail,† bound to the westward.

\* Wind off the right bow.

† Hove too, making little or no headway.



Night—more moderate, divine service held in the cabin, the Rev. Mr. Sprowl officiating.

18th.—Early morning—still more moderate, with the wind from the N. W. Later—squally with rain and a slight fall of snow (queer weather for June) all the canvas set and the ship going eleven knots. Noon—worked the ship's latitude for the first time in eighteen years, the sun's altitude was 60 deg. 51 min., and the declination 23 deg. 25 min. N., which gave the latitude 52 deg. 22 min. N. Here our course was changed to E.S. E. from E. by S.; difference in time between us and New York 3 hours and 15 minutes, and distance to Moville, Londonderry, 950 miles. Two P. M.—passed and signalled the Montreal R. M. S. S. *Nestorian*, five days out from Liverpool and four from Londonderry. Later—passed two sailing ships on the larboard tack,\* bound westward. Evening—squally, with rain and hail. 8 P. M. a committee met to draft a testimonial, testifying our appreciation of the very gentlemanly and polite attention paid us by the captain and his officers during the passage. We have now become as members of one family and begin to feel some regret at the prospect of a speedy separation, for notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, we have passed ten days together in the most sociable and agreeable manner. A difference of opinions has certainly often occurred, for instance, on politics, and the

\* Wind off the left bow.



relative abilities of Generals Grant, McClellan, Sherman and others, all of which occurred in good feeling and without anger.

19th.—An exceedingly fine morning, neither too warm nor too cold, a pleasant breeze continues from the N. W. with a moderate sea, the ship going from ten to eleven knots. Noon—passed and signalled the steamer *Iowa*, of this line, which left Glasgow on the 14th inst., and Londonderry on the 15th, bound to New York.—Afternoon—wind shifted round to the northwest. Evening—the wind still drawing ahead; 8 P. M., wind from N. E.; ship close hauled\* but going her course S. E. by E., 1-2 E., it has again become quite cold. Night—fresh breeze, and “all’s well” is heard from the quartermaster as he strikes the hour on the bell, which is promptly responded to by the lookout man on the forecas-tle deck.

How different the evenings are in these latitudes to what they are in New York and Pennsylvania; there, almost as soon as the sun sets, darkness covers the earth, but here we have hours of beautiful twilight, which must be seen to be appreciated, and now, at 10 P. M., we can see to read on deck. Such a beautiful soft light; and I am informed by the captain that in Glasgow, at this season of the year, it continues to 11 o’clock almost as light as day, thus making the night very short, for the sun rises as early as 3

\* Sails placed so as to be of some benefit.



A. M. How delightful this must be to those persons engaged in field labor, and who wish to evade working out in the heat of the day. How pleased the hard working man in America would be if he could, during the summer months, enjoy such a privilege.

I have now made up my mind to go ashore at Londonderry and go from thence, via Belfast and other places, to Dublin by rail, thence by the government mail steamer to Holyhead, &c., which will give us an opportunity to see a great deal of Ireland, leaving Scotland until our return homeward.

20th.—Light and variable wind, ship going her course under steam, square sails furled, and fore and aft sails drawing but slightly.\* Noon—pleasant with smooth sea. Distance to Moville, Londonderry, 468 miles. Afternoon—furled all sails, they being of no use, ship going nine knots under steam alone. Evening—the same.

This evening a Dr. Maxon, of Geneva, N. Y., by special request of the captain and officers of the ship, delivered a lecture in the cabin on the "Immortality of the Soul." The subject was well handled by him, but it was too deep for the craniums of ordinary persons. The doctor is on his way to Paris and other cities of the Old World to gather more information and to dive further into metaphysics. He is no doubt an exceedingly talented man, and has, I am

\* Doing but little good.



informed, written and published some very excellent works relating to the medical profession. 11 P. M.—beautiful twilight, most of the passengers on deck.

21st.—A fine but light breeze, and from a point which enables us to carry fore and aft sails. The captain expects to make Torry Island (forty miles from Moville) to-morrow morning from 6 to 7 o'clock, or some point on the west coast of Ireland earlier. Lots of Irish coast sea gulls hover around the ship now, a sure indication that we are nearing land. Afternoon—cloudy, with appearance of rain. Evening—beautiful twilight. Capt. Munro was presented this evening after divine service, by the Rev. Mr. Kennedy, with the written testimonial signed by the cabin and second cabin passengers, expressive of the feeling they entertain for him and his officers. The presentation speech was made by Mr. Kennedy and replied to in a few happy remarks by the captain, on behalf of himself and officers. Resolutions were then made that copies of the testimonial be published in Glasgow, Londonderry and New York newspapers.

22d.—Early morning, a pleasant breeze from the same quarter. Land was seen at 5 A. M, on our starboard bow (the western coast of Ireland); at 6 A. M. sighted the island of Torry; at 1:30 passed closely to the R. M. S. S. *St. Andrew*, of the Montreal line, outward bound, the passengers of which cheered us lustily as we passed by. 3 P. M.



Saw the steamship *Britania*, of this line, outward bound, but too far to signal her. At 3:30 the pilot came on board, and we soon got off the village of Moville, where the steam tug came alongside and took off all those going to Londonderry. We soon cast off from the big ship\* amid the cheers and waving of handkerchiefs by those we left behind to proceed further, and then steamed up Lough Foyle against wind and tide; at 6 P. M. we arrived alongside the quay in Derry, and were soon besieged with custom-house officers and porters, the one eager to examine our trunks, and the others fighting and scrambling among themselves, as to who should convey them to the hotels and elsewhere, which was at last settled, but not without some knock-downs between them and the police, of whom there was a good sprinkling. After some difficulty I succeeded in getting our baggage through the hands of the officers, and into the hands of a decent kind of Irishman porter, who conveyed them on a hand-cart to the *Commercial Hotel*, one of the best hotels in the city of Derry, where we were soon comfortably seated at our evening repast, composed of beef steak, (fine and tender) fresh

\* Unfortunately, this fine ship, in a little more than a year afterwards, was lost. She went down when 700 miles off the Irish coast, caused by the breaking of her shaft in a heavy sea. This was on the 25th of November, 1868, and among the lost was Mr. Reed, the first officer, and the chief-engineer, Mr. MacTammany. Among the saved were Capt. Munro, and the purser, Mr. Brown, together with some others of the crew and a few passengers.



cockles (small shell fish), good bread and butter, and delicious tea, which was served up in good style, amid much bowing and scraping, exceeding polite attention.

In my next I will give a brief account of this ancient city and its walls.